

THE TRULY CREATIVE LIFE, OR I Y'AM WHAT I Y'AM

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The first generation of public archaeologists is beginning to pass on to emeritus status. Recognizing this, the Bureau of Land Management has entered into contracts with several institutions to recruit the second generation of public archaeologists who will manage the cultural heritage of agency lands. The agency commits to the students to place them in full performance GS-11 positions when they receive their Master's degrees. This paper discusses some of the experiences which I have had with the program over the past five years. It offers some suggestions to academic institutions and to students on how to make the experience more meaningful for both — and in the end, how to make it a successful experience for the agency. In order to make a difference, one has to live a creative life that combines academic achievement with the ability to resolve on-the-ground conflicts, the willingness to give up personal time, and the dedication to be a lifelong volunteer to proselytize on behalf of our resources.

INTRODUCTION

To begin, I want to thank my good friend John Foster for the wonderful words he said about the founding father of Cultural Resources Management, Fritz Riddell. We will greatly miss him, but we all know that he is with us in spirit. His life was truly a creative one, one that all of us could benefit from using as a model. He was what I refer to as the true missionary archaeologist, the archaeologist who always spoke of the merits of his profession with an evangelical fervor.

Look around you; all of you in this room are stewards of the past. Whether you promote our discipline in an academic, business, volunteer, or government setting, you are stewards of the past whose jobs are missionizing for the past.

We have had a full generation of what McGimsey called Public Archaeology. A lot of sites have been excavated, put in boxes and placed in museums or storage facilities; many sites have been avoided by projects so they can survive another few years; still others have been placed in public management categories and interpreted or researched to answer questions about the past and to share information with the public—those who eventually pay the bill.

Will our discipline last another generation? Probably. Will it be the same 20 years from now? Probably not. Will we still have sites to study in 20 years, or 50, or 100, or 1,000? Probably, maybe, I hope so, and probably not would be my answers to those questions. In a think-tank style

hypothetical exercise that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recently conducted, it was felt by most participants that most of the sites remaining a millennium from now would be in Parks and represented by farmer/agricultural sites with structures, governmental buildings, and monuments to infrastructure. The exercise concluded that our hunting-gathering sites don't stand much of a chance, because they are not "glamorous" and they are so very fragile.

In her recent paper entitled "Going, Going, Gone," Dr. Marilyn Nickels, Director of Heritage Management for the BLM in Washington, D.C., talked about the crisis in funding American historic-preservation efforts. She pointed out that some individuals who, as prime movers, have been responsible for getting the funding needed to slow down the loss of our prehistoric past, are beginning to talk about retirement. She talked about the current generation of cultural resources archaeologists getting ready to retire and hand the torch off to the next one, but wondered if there would be a next generation because, due to the cycles of government funding, the BLM missed an entire generation of hiring. The agency appears to be hiring our replacements at the last minute. Is it too late? Will the institutional knowledge walk away with the first generation of BLM archaeologists, she asked?

As we move into the 21st Century, I look around this room and see the pleasant reflections of our colleagues whose once full, long manes are now shorter, some of the full heads of hair are now shiny, others who had colors in their hair are now

sporting gray eyebrows, beards, and short gray hair. I can see our membership being reinvigorated with a new generation of archaeologists, and I see some younger archaeologists who ultimately will take our places in archaeology and in society. I see the second generation folks like Alex Degregory, James Barnes, Heather Busum, Cheryl Foster-Curley, and Julie Burcell, who instantly come to mind as exemplary of folks who can replace us, if they can maintain the tolerance for hassles in the profession or the workplace.

The BLM in California has developed a strategy to recruit, mentor, and even replace the first-generation archaeologists with those who will eventually become the second generation of agency cultural resource "advocates." Here, I need to pause and reflect a bit upon where we have come from and perhaps why.

The other day I overheard my colleague, Dr. Stephen Horne, who sits across the sound-proof, "Dilbert-style" room divider from me, talking to his home refinancing specialist about something as mundane as home interest rates. Then I heard Steve respond, and the tone in his voice changed and you could tell that the conversation on the other end of the telephone had changed, because the question Steve had been asked was what his occupation was. He said he was an archaeologist. Immediately the conversation became animated and Steve was talking about being an archaeologist and the other person was saying that it must be a cool job, and Steve said it was a cool job, and he had been doing archaeology for 30 years and blah blah blah. Who has not had such a conversation or been a party to such? Except for other archaeologists, it's almost a universal response when someone asks your occupation that the response is wow, how interesting. Often stated is something like, "I always wanted to do that, but I had to go to work and become a plumber, an oilworker, a truck driver, a school teacher." In other words, they had to make a living. Then they often go on to say that their mother or father told them that they would never find a job in archaeology, because they were certain there were no jobs in archaeology. Quit being a dreamer, they were told, and get a real job!

Well, we know differently, don't we? Not only are there jobs, there are careers in

archaeology, cultural anthropology, cultural heritage management, teaching and meaningful jobs working with Native Americans and other groups. Jobs working with federal land managers to ensure that we save America's past exist and today are plentiful.

I remember when I realized the career that I wanted, and volunteered weekend after weekend, vacation after vacation for several years until I finally got a paid job in San Diego. It was at the Seeley Stables where Fritz Riddell had hired Paul Ezell to excavate the foundations for a reconstruction project. Tim Gross was my crew chief. Paul was able to give us a small salary of \$1.72 per hour. In 1972 it was money for doing what I thought I wanted to do. I remember my father laughing at my excitement over earning \$1.72 an hour and shaking his head at my enthusiasm over making money doing what I wanted to do, and for the minimum wage!

Archaeology became not only my profession but an obsession. It still is. It is more than an occupation. It is a life style because, for many of us, it not only merges into all of our daily activities, but it occupies and dominates our weekends, vacation time, and spare time. When my partner and best friend, Judyth Reed, talks about getting away on vacation, we talk about all kinds of places we could go, then either become crew for an excavation project or spend money chasing the heritage tourism brass ring, looking at archeological and historical sites somewhere in the world. We are not alone; most of you do the same, because archaeology is more than an occupation. It becomes, as my graduate-school colleague, Ron May says, a religion. It is with that much fervor that we tackle our profession and meld it into our everyday lives. I don't know many archaeologists who, when they get together, do not discuss archaeology as intensively as others talk religious beliefs. Most of my weekends throughout my career have been occupied by volunteering to help others with their projects, or now, with the exciting California Archaeological Site Stewardship Program (CASSP), based on a weekend program called *Partners in Time* which was created by archaeologists Janine McFarlan and Stephen Horne.

Some of you celebrated Fritz's life at his funeral, which had a religious twist because of

what the minister said about Fritz finding religion sometime in his life. What I enjoyed most of all was the folks who got to talk about their experience of Fritz living the life he wanted as an archaeologist. All during his lifetime of employment and then into retirement he did archaeology. As we listened to the speakers share their fond memories and experiences, I was reminded that Fritz had been planning yet another trip to Peru to conduct research and to excavate. Fritz was 82 years old! This was indeed the creative life that he lived, and that most of us have been able to live, because we as archaeologist have been able to blend our lives and occupations together as a meaningful personal adventure. My family has worked in the oil and gas industry for several generations. I have never heard one of my brothers say that they love their occupation as oilfield workers and they think that they will give up their weekends to help someone spud in a well, maintain a pumping unit, or sweeten a pipeline of oil going to the refinery! At the best they say that the work is ok and the money is fairly good. But I have seen Eric Ritter smile as he plans his next volunteer project to Baja California, I have seen Bill Olsen grin as he types prehistoric beads, I have heard Paul Chace chortle as he adds another Chinese soup spoon to his collection, and I have seen John Foster's eyes sparkle as he talks about his latest underwater-archaeology adventure. The creative life. Yes, it is.

This year I have had the great pleasure of working with Julia Bendimez from INAH in Mexicali and some of her colleagues in trying to develop a meaningful trans-border relationship for the enhancement of heritage resources. We have had phone conversations, individual meetings, group meetings, and tours. On one of the tours someone - I cannot remember who and it doesn't matter - started asking her about her history, her family, lots of personal kinds of questions. Her response was a carbon copy of what you would hear from many of us here at the SCAs or SAAs; she responded something to the effect that, "archaeology is my family, I spend all of my time trying to save the past, it is my family, my hobby, my life." She is indeed an archaeologist; it should be easy to develop a good relationship between the SCA and INAH. Like the rest of us, Julia indeed lives a creative life.

A few years ago my wise State Director, a native of California, called me in and said that he

had noticed that the average age of archaeologists in California BLM was about 47 or 48, and in his typical fashion he asked me what I was going to do about it. I told him we needed to bring in the replacements now so that they could learn our jobs and some of the institutional knowledge that we all had before all of us started retiring on him. He said that there was a Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) that was being developed in which students signed a contract saying that they guaranteed they would get their degree (generally a Master's Degree), the BLM would employ them so they would have a job during their degree program, and after getting their degree they would be placed as a second archeologist being mentored in a Field Office. Rick Hanks, the BLM's founding archaeologist, was the SCEP coordinator at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo.

After a few years we had a cadre of good students in place, all working on their degrees and just waiting for us older folks to leave. Actually, we now have a cadre of good students who are interested in the archaeology of California and in working for the Bureau throughout the State. They are employed as far south as El Centro and as far north as Alturas. Most of them have come from California State University, Bakersfield through an excellent program developed by California archaeologists Mark Sutton and Bob Yohe, who closely mentor their graduate students. We also have SCEPs enrolled at Sonoma State University, CSU Sacramento, UC Davis, and San Bernardino State University.

The SCEPs are supposed to have an experienced, in-house archaeologist as a mentor. We have some situations where this has not been possible, because we have had long-term vacancies in some positions. But, generally, the SCEPs are really working as seconds to the archeologists, and are in on-the-job training positions, learning how to be agency cultural resources specialists. They are learning not only how to process the agency's internal and external business through the Section 106 process, but they are spending a lot of time doing the pro-active work, what we call Section 110 work, and much of that is on weekends and holidays because that is when volunteers are available. They are working with our Site Stewardship and Heritage Education programs and others to help save our heritage resources for another generation. I have the pleasure of

watching them become the missionary archaeologists that we have been, and they are doing a good job of it.

Two of the SCEP Archaeologists will be getting their graduate degrees from Bakersfield this spring, and both will be converted to full-time positions. I congratulate Jack Scott and Kim Cuevas for their diligence and their outstanding contributions to the archaeology of central California. By the way, both conducted their thesis work on public lands at very important prehistoric sites.

The other students are going to make good contributions that they can be especially proud of, and I think most of them are living creative lives by blending work and volunteer efforts. I recommend to these second-generation cultural resources specialists that they try to balance their lives a little more than many of us have, and maybe the third generation of cultural resources managers, in 20 or 30 years, will be easier to recruit.

I have had several opportunities to go into the field and visit with Dr. Mark Allen's class from Cal Poly Pomona as they conduct research at Red Mountain Spring in the Mojave Desert. His students reflect his personal feelings toward the discipline and toward site protection. It is exciting to watch Mark's interaction with his students. The public lands are full of opportunities to conduct research. In Mark's case they are studying an entire catchment basin, midden sites, hunting blinds, milling stations, and rock art.

In 1980, Margaret Lyneis was contracted by the BLM to examine the source of the impacts to archeological sites in the desert. She found that only 38% of the villages and campsites were in good condition, compared to 71% of the rock art sites. A more recent study on the behavior of OHV-users found that 78% of all off-highway vehicle riders in a study area were riding where they were not supposed to be riding, not on roads or trails, but across country. At Margaret's predicted rate of impact, she felt the desert was losing 1% of its archaeological site base each year; at the rate of the most recent study, it is even faster.

Recently the BLM hired that "bull-fighting archaeologist" Billy Clewlow and his outstanding

crew of young archaeologists to look at sites he and Heizer had recorded in the desert in the early 1960s. (And that Rick Hanks and Eric Ritter had re-recorded in the 1970s.) In the off-highway-vehicle open area he studied he could find no sites. Zero. They were all gone. In surrounding areas, he found that sites were still there but were being run over and were in danger of being seriously impacted by recreational free-play. Where there were once cremation sites there are now campfire rock rings. Where there was once rock art there is now only rock. Other damage was being done to middens by cattle wallowing in riparian areas and by casual off-highway driving through the middens.

It is going to be up to the second generation to try to save more of our prehistoric resources. A few agency archaeologists can work hard during the week and can volunteer many weekends, but it is time for us to work together to save our resources, not only with volunteer site stewards, but with those of you out there in academia — those who can teach and have an audience. There are lots of questions to be answered, there are still lots of sites and complexes to be studied. I ask you to think about getting more of your students involved in archaeology on the public lands, working with Indian peoples, getting them to understand the Section 106 and CEQA processes, the merits of the National Register and how to complete a nomination, and have them understand the CFR 800 regulations as classroom exercises. And study, record, and analyze the rock art, because if we are not really careful, based upon the population projections for California, the only prehistoric sites that we will have left three or four generations from now may be the rock art sites, because folks cannot drive over them very easily. We all need to enhance our missionizing for archeological resources. Not only do we need enthusiastic, educated archaeologists and the educated, caring public but, as David Whitley says, what we need the most is time. It is going to take time to save our past and to fully train a new generation and have them effectively argue and advocate for the resources.

I for one want more generations to experience what we as archaeologists have experienced. I want them to have a creative life. Paul Ezell, the mentor of most of the archeologists in this room who went to graduate school in San Diego, liked to emphasize two important components of

archeology. Those of us who were his students should remember them well. The first one is extremely important in how we look at our heritage: All archaeology is local archaeology, he believed; therefore, you need to be sensitive to the needs of the local community and share what you have found out about the past locally. It was the foundation of Paul's approach to the past.

The second one is important for how we look at our careers, our lives, and how we will measure those who follow us in our careers: Paul said that he liberally borrowed this quote from Arnold Toynbee, the world historian. He reminded us continually that, "In the truly creative life there is little difference between work and recreation." I hope that all of you continue having a truly creative life.